

## JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND



ACCOUNTING FOR AMERICANS LOST DURING PAST U.S. CONFLICTS

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~ NEWS RELEASE ~

### **TEAM MEMBERS HONORED ON ANNIVERSARY OF HELICOPTER CRASH**

*10th Anniversary remembrance ceremony to honor 16 U.S./Vietnamese members who perished after MI-17 helicopter crash in 2001*

QUANG BINH, Socialist Republic of Vietnam (April 5, 2011) - A remembrance ceremony to honor the sacrifice of 16 U.S. and Vietnamese individuals who perished as the result of a 2001 helicopter crash will be held Thursday, April 7, 2011, in the Quang Binh province of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Sixteen people died as heroes. Seven casualties were American, nine were Vietnamese—all of whom were working to keep a sacred U.S. promise: to recover Americans still unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

The Americans were members of a Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) and the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CIL-HI) advance team on a routine mission preparing for the 65th Joint Field Activity. Also killed in the crash were two members of the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP), the Vietnamese agency that assists the U.S. in its investigation and recovery efforts in Vietnam. Three Vietnamese aircrew members, and four aircraft technicians were also killed

The Russian-made Mi-17 helicopter carrying the crew crashed on a hillside in Quang Binh province and was the first and only fatal accident involving the recovery of American remains in more than 25 years.

The JTF-FA used the Mi-17 in support of U.S. and Vietnamese efforts to recover the remains of Americans still unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. According to a report issued by U.S. investigators, deteriorating weather conditions, poor visibility, and flying in high terrain were predominant factors in the accident.

The U.S. and Vietnam casualties onboard were: U.S. Army Lt. Col. Rennie M. Cory Jr., U.S. Army Lt. Col. George D. Martin III, U.S. Air Force Maj. Charles E. Lewis, U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Steven Moser, U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Pedro J. Gonzales, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Tommy J. Murphy, U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Robert M. Flynn, Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Personnel (VNOSMP) SR COL Tran Van Bien, VNOSMP Mr. Nguyen Thanh Ha, Northern Service Flight Company (NSFC) LTC Nguyễn Văn Hà, NSFC LTC Nguyễn Thanh Sơn, NSFC MAJ Vũ Phạm Thế Kiên, NSFC MAJ Nguyễn Hữu Nhậm, NSFC LT Giáp Thanh Ngân, NSFC LT Đặng Ngọc, and NSFC LT Phạm Duy Dũng.

"All these men are heroes. They gave their lives for something they believed in," then U.S. Ambassador Pete Peterson said following the 2001 crash.

The helicopter carrying 16 crew and passengers crashed in a mountainous area of Quang Binh while preparing for future recovery operations. Quang Binh province is located approximately 250 miles south of Hanoi.

"We are not alone in our endeavor to bring back our fallen," said Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, head of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, the successor command of JTF-FA. "All of these men, our own and the Vietnamese, risked their lives and it is with great humility that we honor their sacrifice."

Prior to the crash, the Mi-17 type aircraft accomplished hundreds of missions, logging thousands of flight hours safely and effectively, and continues to still serve the joint U.S./Vietnamese MIA teams.

More than 1,800 heroes have been identified and returned to their families since the United States' humanitarian efforts to account for their war-dead began in the 1970's.

Created from the 2003 merger of the JTF-FA and CIL-HI, JPAC has the worldwide mission of achieving the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts.



U.S. Army Lt. Col. Rennie M. Cory Jr. and U.S. Army Lt. Col. Rennie M. Cory Jr. and Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Personnel (VNOSMP) SR COL Tran Van Bien (Photo courtesy of JPAC)

"Until They Are Home"

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